

May/June 2008

County of Los Angeles  
Department of Parks and Recreation



THE GREEN SCENE

Make a Splash! And Chill Out! With the  
Department of Parks and Recreation



If you are looking for a respite from the heat of our Southern California summer, a safe place for you or your children to learn to swim or improve your aquatic skills, an evening of watery fun for your teenagers or the entire family, or just a cool place to relax, we have 29 wonderful swimming pools just waiting for you to **Make a Splash!** and 14 lakes where you can **Chill Out!**

Our County pools are free to the public and during the summer, they are open seven days a week (hours vary). A couple of pools are even open year round. There is something for everyone: recreational swimming, swimming lessons, swimming and diving teams, adult lap swims and special events. Some pools even offer water polo and synchronized swimming. Most of the pools have teen nights and family nights as well.

What better way to *Chill Out!* than spending time at one of the County's 14 cool, inviting lakes – ideal places for swimming, boating or other watery activities guaranteed to relax even the most frenetic of personalities.

One of the reasons our pools and lakes are safe is because we have some of the most highly-skilled lifeguards working today. The award-winning Junior Lifeguard Program is partially responsible for this. Children and youth who reach a certain level of swimming proficiency can begin actual lifeguard training. They learn water safety, life-saving skills and physical fitness, and also compete with other Junior Lifeguard teams in meets held Countywide. Once they complete the training, become certified and reach age 17, they are eligible for employment as

full-fledged lifeguards at the pools. This is not only a wonderful way for youth to learn, become physically fit and acquire useful skills, but this program helps ensure that the County has a steady pool of talented, highly-trained lifeguards from which to hire.

This summer there's no need for anyone to sit at home sweltering in the summer heat. There's no reason for any child in the County to be at risk from not knowing how to swim. And there's no better way for a family to cool off and have fun together. Check our website for the location of a County swimming pool or lake near you to *Make a Splash!* and *Chill Out!*



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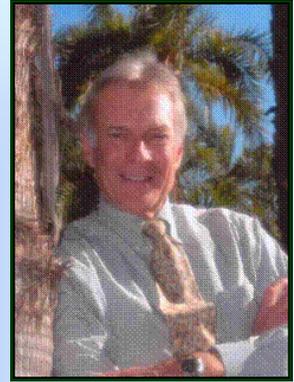
## Greetings from the Director

I hope you enjoyed ***Make a Splash!*** month in May and took advantage of the department's 29 public swimming pools and all their programs.

With the warm weather here, I hope you are ready to stay cool and ***Chill Out!*** at any of our 14 Lakes throughout the department. Get out there, relax and bring your family and friends to visit the swim beaches, boating, fishing, camping and picnicking facilities at our lakes and share our resources with the public. Together we can make a positive impact, and ***Chill Out!***

Our pools and lakes together provide excellent relief from the hot weather that does not seem to be letting up.

Be sure to continue to take advantage of our facilities and spread the word.



*Russ Guiney, Director*

## L.A County Parks and Recreation and KCBS/KCAL Defeat the Heat!

As the temperature rises and summer time gets under way the Department of Parks and Recreation will join the KCAL 9/CBS2 promotional team for a third consecutive year as a sponsor for the *Defeat the Heat Summer Pool Program*. Each year a park location from each of the five Los Angeles County Supervisorial Districts is designated to participate. This year's five participating parks are Helen Keller Park, Cerritos Regional Park, Val Verde Park, Arcadia Regional Park and Dalton Park's splash pad. The *Defeat the Heat* "Free Pool Friday" begins July 4 at Helen Keller Park. More than one-thousand pool goers are expected to benefit from the *Defeat the Heat* program.

This exciting program gives our recreational swimmers the opportunity to receive free door prizes, give-a-ways and register to win four tickets to Six Flags Magic Mountain. It also attracts hundreds of swimmers each year to our pool facilities. Past giveaways have included sun screen, first aid kits, Subway sandwiches, energy drinks and healthy snacks. As a sponsor the department receives logo inclusion on all materials including the official onsite banner, a promotional spot on channels 2 and 9, the website and on-air promotional spots. You've probably seen our pool lifeguards being interviewed about pool safety and programs. The *Defeat the Heat* program not only adds excitement to our pools, but also gives the department positive media exposure and the opportunity to spread the word about our award winning aquatic programs and facilities throughout Los Angeles County!



## Children Have Always Had Their Playgrounds, Now Adults Have Thiers Too!



Thanks to the partnership of Kaiser Permanente, Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina, and The Trust for Public Land (TPL), five east agency parks now have Fitness Zones. Fitness Zones are easy to use outdoor gym installations that provide strength training, flexibility and cardio workouts. They are located in five parks from the East Agency and they create new opportunities for park users to get active. The equipment resembles those found in health clubs, but is free for all to use and appropriate for a variety of ages and fitness levels.

The equipment is durable, vandal resistant, and can be used in various configurations. Fitness Zones focus on improving general health through weight loss, improving cardiovascular health, increased flexibility and strength building. Each six to eight piece Fitness Zone includes ADA compliant surfacing and bilingual instructions. Fitness Zones also feature bilingual health and fitness information panels with general nutrition information, usage instructions, and healthy eating guidelines.

The “outdoor gyms” are a reflection of the Healthy Park’s Mission to develop health and wellness programs to improve the quality of life of Los Angeles County residents.



### Fitness Zones Locations:

- Belvedere Community Regional Park  
4914 East Cesar Chavez Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90022
- Dalton Park  
18867 East Armstead Street  
Azusa, CA 91702
- Franklin D. Roosevelt Park  
7600 Graham Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90001
- San Angelo Park  
245 South San Angelo Avenue  
La Puente, CA 91746
- Sunshine County Park  
515 Deepmead Avenue  
La Puente, CA 91744



## Teens Have Say on Proposed Web Site Targeting Youth Market



It isn't often that teenagers get to call the shots, but on a recent Saturday, 24 of our parks' brightest teens met at Farnsworth Park to do just that. The Youth (Teen) Focus Group spent the day reviewing and critiquing a web site created for them by USC software engineering graduate students under the guidance of the Chief Information Office and Parks and Recreation IT Supervisor Jeramy Gray. The experimental site not only allows users to access information about parks, programs and services, but also enables them

to "blog" and share personal content with other social websites, such as Facebook, YouTube and MySpace – all enormously popular with teens.

Driven by the department's determination to reach out to this unique population with an interactive web site, and facilitated by newly appointed Youth Program Coordinator Meliza Hernandez, the meeting offered the teens a hands-on opportunity to access the test site on computers, review the design for ease of use, appeal, content, etc., and suggest revisions, additions and deletions. Their enthusiastic and creative responses provided great input and a positive learning experience for everyone involved. The department hopes to have the site up and running within the next year.



## Mac Rodriguez Earns Title of Hero

One fateful Sunday, Obregon Park Supervisor Mac Rodriguez was on his way to a family gathering when he noticed a black 2003 Audi racing on the freeway. The Audi struck the left rear of a van, which careened toward the right shoulder of the freeway and rolled over several times.

Eleven year-old Jasmine Aguirre was ejected from the van. Having witnessed the sequence of events, Mac's first instinct was to help the little girl who had landed on the dirt and weeds. "As I reached her I saw her right leg crushed and she was losing a lot of blood and I knew I had to apply a tourniquet. He also talked to the girl to keep her alert and he remembers her saying "but I had my seatbelt on sir." He made sure that she could not see her leg so she wouldn't panic. Mac remained at the scene until the paramedics arrived and continued to assist the girl's dad and his other three children. Mac learned that prior to the accident, the father had lost his job and had stopped paying for his car insurance. To complicate things, his wife abandoned him and their four children.

Jasmine survived the accident, but her leg had to be amputated because it was severely injured in the wreck. Mac was so deeply moved by the tragedy that he asked friends and colleagues for donations. He collected money, toys, clothes and even a Thanksgiving turkey and he made sure everything was delivered to the family before the holidays.

There are different ideas about what constitutes a hero. Some people consider an athlete or famous figure to be a hero. Mac Rodriguez can now carry that title with him for the rest of his life and we're honored to have such an exceptional and kindhearted person as part of the Parks and Recreation family.



*Left to Right:* Russ Guiney, Parks and Recreation Director; Mac Rodriguez, Obregon Park Supervisor; John Wicker, Parks and Recreation Chief Deputy Director

## Chill Out! at LA County Lakes



On anyone's list, these four LA County lake parks would rank among the top recreational facilities nationwide: **Castaic Lake Recreation Area, Bonelli Regional Park, Santa Fe Dam Regional Park and Whittier Narrows Regional Recreation Area.**

For sheer size, **Castaic Lake** is the king. A holding reservoir for some of the western region's water supply, the upper lake rests behind a dam that is 425 feet high, holds

350,000 acre feet of water at full capacity and has a shoreline of 29 miles. The two lakes offer fishing, boating, swimming, camping and more. The lakes are stocked from October through March, and the current record for striped bass is 43 pounds.

**Bonelli Regional Park** prides itself on the incomparably beautiful setting for its 250-acre lake and the extensive and varied concessions available, including Jet Ski and boat rentals, an equestrian center, *Raging Waters*, RV camp sites and hot tubs. It's a great site for company or family picnics, windsurfing, hiking or even tying the knot as it has a wedding chapel available for rent.

**Santa Fe Dam Regional Park** is touted by many birdwatching organizations for the extensive and sometimes rare bird species that can be seen there. The 70-acre lake offers swimming, boating, fishing and waterskiing, and on the last Friday night of every month, campers can vie for prizes in the all-night "Moonlight Fishing" event. This park is also the home of the annual Southern California Renaissance Pleasure Faire, an event held over several weekends each spring.



**Whittier Narrows Regional Recreation Area** has three lakes comprising 80 acres of water in which to fish, sail and swim. The 1400-acre park offers skeet shooting, equestrian activities, areas for model plane and boat fanciers, a tennis center and BMX bike track, along with numerous other activities. It also houses a nature center and the American Military Museum.

Everyone needs to *Chill Out!* at times. Our lakes offer so many cool, enjoyable ways to achieve that.

## ***Chill Out!* with our Departments Boat Mechanics**



Jimmy Sorrel  
Castaic Lake State Recreation Area Mechanic

Summer officially started on June 21<sup>st</sup>, and our Los Angeles County lifeguards are out in full force patrolling the waters, making sure our park patrons *Chill Out!* safely while enjoying our Department's 14 lakes. But the lifeguards can't do their job without the staff members who maintain the patrol boats and any other equipment like tractors, brush chippers, forklifts, etc. These are the Department of Parks and Recreation Boat Mechanics.

These employees play a very important role by keeping our Department's patrol/rescue boats operational, because they're used to save lives everyday.

Jimmy Sorrel, one of our Department's most respected boat mechanics, has over 35 years of service, starting in 1974 at the mower shop in Arcadia Park, and has been currently stationed at Castaic Lake State Recreation Area for the last 26 years. Not only is Jimmy a great mechanic, he also restores vintage cars, twenty to date, mainly vintage mustangs, motorcycles or anything old, he says.

Also one of the newest staff members to the department, boat mechanic, Paul Chavez, has been with the department for over a year and is responsible for maintaining boats at Frank G. Bonelli Park and Santa Fe Dam Regional Park.

Jimmy and Paul's dedication to service helps ensure that our park patrons can have fun and *Chill Out!* this summer at any of our lakes and if you happen to visit Castaic Lake, Santa Fe Dam or Frank G. Bonelli Park, stop by and say hello!



Paul Chavez  
Frank G. Bonelli Park and  
Santa Fe Dam Regional Park Mechanic

## Trevor Zemp Leads Lifeguards In North Agency

Anyone who still thinks being a lifeguard means lounging around the pool, scoring a great tan and looking cool needs to meet Trevor Zemp and his team of North Agency lifeguards.

Okay, so maybe you *do* get a great tan, but few of us can boast the skills, dedication and knowledge it takes to be a professional lifeguard and assume responsibility for the lives and safety of the thousands of people who visit our County pools all summer long. Trevor is the new Aquatics Recreation Services Manager for the North Agency and, according to him, the requirements to become a County lifeguard are daunting and the training never ends.

A Simi Valley native, his family moved to the north end of L.A. County when he was 11. He never left. While a student at Palmdale High School, he became involved in wrestling. To keep the team in shape, the wrestling coach made swimming a requirement. At 17, Trevor began training to be a lifeguard, a part-time job he retained while earning a BS in telecommunication technology. After college, he worked full time as a computer consultant while still training County lifeguards part-time. Since 2004, he's been with the department year-round and was recently promoted to manager of the entire North Agency Aquatics Division. He oversees approximately 75 employees, including pool managers and senior guards.

He's always on the lookout for creative ways to interest youth in swimming. "It's easy to get kids involved in other sports, but swimming is tougher because it is so specialized." Besides the Junior Lifeguard Program and swim and dive teams at the pools, they also entice youth into the water with the "Junior Frogman" program where they experience SCUBA Air Snorkeling (SAS). The boys and girls are "buoyed" so they can't sink, but get to experience breathing compressed air in the water.

Teaching is Trevor's favorite part of the job. He trains Lifeguard Instructors and SCUBA divers, as well as lifeguards themselves. Lifeguards receive the same emergency response training that firefighters and the police receive, including training in CPR, blood-borne pathogens and First Aid. Besides the initial training of 64 hours, they receive weekly in-service training, as well. "I love taking recruits who basically know nothing and turning them into useful, well-trained, confident people who can make a real contribution."

During the winter months, Trevor spends his days training Recreation staff in CPR and First Aid, conducting skills clinics, recruiting and running his "Rookie School" for new lifeguards. The competition for lifeguard recruits is fierce among department agencies and the cities. One innovation he introduced to the recruiting wars was to advertise online at Craig's List, Monster.com and Coolsummerjobs.com.



## Rick Tang an Inspiration in the Water and Out



From swimming lessons to maintenance of splash pads, the East Agency Aquatic Recreational Services Team takes care of it. From Lifeguards to locker room attendants, this team is in charge of providing water recreational activities and the maintenance of swimming pools and splash pads within the East Agency. This team of around 100 employees takes care of 8 swimming pools and several splash pads that require daily safety checks to ensure they are running properly and provide a fun and safe environment for the public.

Rick Tang, Pool Operations Manager, oversees the staff at the East Agency responsible for all of these tasks. Rick has been the Pool Operations Manager since 2005 and has found many challenges during the past couple of years on the job. One of those challenges is generating great ideas for new and innovative aquatic programs that meet his district's needs. One of the ideas that Rick has been working on is the expansion of the swimming lessons by including snorkeling as part of the program to familiarize the students with this new concept. He is also working with the North Agency to increase the amount of students on the certified divers program.

Rick Tang also inspires other students as a teacher at East Los Angeles College, where he has learned that many children have been inspired to continue their education because of recreational programs available through the county pools. Many have continued on with their education due in part to the various aquatic related programs he has been involved with, both inside and outside of the County. This is one of the greatest satisfactions of Rick's job, to lead children out of the streets and to motivate them to continue their education and make a difference in society.



East Agency  
Lifeguard Training

## Tony Martinez, Veteran Parks and Recreation Aquatics Expert

Everyone has heard of Tony Martinez, a veteran at Parks and Recreation. He started with our Department in 1983 as a pool lifeguard and has earned his way up to the Aquatics Manager position in the South Agency. For the past three years he has managed a staff of about 300 lifesaving employees and 100 non-lifesaving employees who oversee the management of 16 pools throughout the agency. Tony has encountered many challenges during his managing years, including the most common of recruiting new pool lifeguards. To address this challenge, Tony has built a successful relationship with the Los Angeles Unified School District in efforts to recruit young students to join the Junior Lifeguard Program every year and subsequently becoming pool lifeguards.



When asked about the rewards of his job he does not hesitate to answer that his greatest satisfaction is to see kids become productive adults and knowing that he made a positive impact in their life.

Many children have been inspired to continue their education and to change their life because of the Aquatics Program. One great example is from Faviola Zepeda, a current employee from Parks and Recreation who started attending the swimming lessons at Jesse Owens Park when she was 12 years old. Faviola went on to competitive swimming, winning several medals and later joining the Junior Lifeguard Program. After hearing from her coach that the department was hiring pool lifeguards she decided to apply and was later hired in 2003 as a pool lifeguard. Faviola said “The Aquatics Program was a life-changing experience and the staff at the pools became like a second family to me”. This program has driven her to live a healthier and more active lifestyle than the one she would have followed if she didn’t join the Aquatics Program. Faviola continued to say “Tony Martinez’s inspirational words made an impact in the positive decisions that I made in my life.”



Pool Lifeguards  
Graduating Class of 2007

One of the strongest programs in the South Agency Aquatics is the Competitive Swimming Program and Tony Martinez thrives to expand this successful program as well as other aquatics programs that make such a positive impact on children’s future.

Department Celebrates  
Grand Opening of Ted Watkins Pool  
During *Make a Splash!* Month in May



# HIGH FIVE!

For Those Who Go Above and Beyond...

My two children participated in a golf program hosted by the County and Mike McMonegal was the program director. I can't say enough good things about the program he planned for over forty young children. I especially appreciated the experience in which he handled all the children. Thank you so much for providing this program to the children of LA County! If it were not for the program many of the children, including my own, would never have the opportunity to experience the game of golf.

Mrs. Suzie Park  
Lomita, CA

Dear Supervisor Knabe and Mr. Guiney,

I wanted to take this opportunity to send this note of appreciation and encourage you to continue to support the Los Angeles County Junior Golf Program. My granddaughter, who is 4 years old, thoroughly enjoyed the program and has gained some valuable experience and knowledge of the game. The instructors that you employ are not only professional but are patient and encouraging to every child. I hope you continue to support this program well into the future.

Mrs. Diana McCormick  
Whittier, CA

Dear Supervisor Don Knabe,

Thank you for having me play and learn golfing on the Diamond Bar Golf Course. I had so much fun at the competition! I even won a silver medal! My favorite part of the program was the driving range, chipping and putting is okay to me.

I hope I can enter the program again. Again, thank you very, very much! Say hello to the coaches for me!

Tracy Chen  
Diamond Bar, CA

## COMING NEXT MONTH:

July is Parks and Recreation Month  
Go Fore It! Month  
Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights  
And, much more!

## GIVE Someone a HIGH FIVE!

Do you know someone in our department who deserves special recognition? Maybe you were on a tight deadline and that person helped you meet it. Maybe you were having a tough work day and that person helped you beat it. You know who those people are, the ones who go above and beyond. Help us recognize them. Email their name and a short paragraph of why they deserve a High Five! to [iperius@parks.lacounty.gov](mailto:iperius@parks.lacounty.gov) and we'll do our best to include them in the High Five!



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